

Regular Meeting  
Monday, April 2, 2012  
6:00 pm  
Chowan County Public Safety Center  
305 West Freemason Street

MINUTES

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Monday, April 2, 2012 at 6:00 pm in the Chowan County Public Safety Center, 305 West Freemason Street Edenton NC. Present: Chairman Eddy Goodwin, Commissioners Keith Nixon, Jeff Smith, Emmett Winborne, Ralph Cole, Ellis Lawrence and John Mitchener. Staff Present: County Manager Zee Lamb, Finance Officer Kim Woodley and Board Clerk Susanne Stallings.

Chairman Goodwin called the meeting to order and led the group in the pledge. Commissioner Nixon provided the invocation.

**Public Comment**

Chairman Goodwin called for public comment.

There was none.

**Consent Agenda**

Chairman Goodwin then presented the consent agenda.

**Tax Release and Collector's Report (attached)**

Moore, K	\$191.95	Vehicle Sold
Owens. S.	\$148.47	SITUS - Georgia

**Approval of Minutes**

Review and approval of the minutes of February 20, 2012 and March 5, 2012.

Board Clerk Susanne Stallings noted one correction to the closed session minutes of February 20, 2012.

Commissioner Nixon moved that the Board approve the consent agenda with the change in the minutes of February 20, 2012. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

**Request for addition of road to the State Secondary Roads System**

Mr. Lamb stated that the County has received a petition signed by the property owners of Windsor Lane. He stated the petition is requesting that Windsor Lane be added to the State Highway Secondary Roads System. Mr. Lamb added that after consideration, the Board of Commissioners may forward this request to the NC Department of Transportation for its investigation with the enclosed resolution.

Commissioner Smith asked if the county reviews for the property owner signatures.

Mr. Lamb stated that DOT investigates the request adding that the County is consenting to the request.

Chairman Goodwin and Commissioner Nixon expressed their concern over the lack of information in the petition.

Mr. Lamb clarified that the county is not responsible for investigating the request, but rather has to provide consent for DOT's consideration as to whether or not the road should be added to the state system.

Commissioner Mitchener moved that the Board approve the resolution. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

A copy of the resolution requesting DOT review the road and consider it for state maintenance is in the meeting file labeled April 2, 2012.

#### **Resolution in Opposition to Ferry Tolls**

Chairman Goodwin noted that the Board on February 20, 2012 reviewed one draft resolution from NC 20 regarding opposition to ferry tolls. He stated that at that time, the Board requested that it receive a copy of a resolution approved by the Albemarle Commission Board.

Commissioner Smith stated that several of the Albemarle Commission Board members were not opposed to user fees (tolls) for the ferry, but were concerned on its impact for local residents. He moved that the Board of Commissioners adopt the resolution.

Commissioner Nixon stated he did not oppose tolls on vacationers

Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed (6-1 Nixon).

#### **RESOLUTION BY THE CHOWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OPPOSING THE INSTITUTION OF TOLLS ON FERRY SERVICE OPERATIONS TO AND FROM OCRACOE ISLAND OR THE INCREASE IN EXISTING TOLLS**

WHEREAS Ocracoke Island , located in Hyde County, is the State's only barrier island with no alternate form of public transportation infrastructure provided to them in return for the payment of State tax dollars, and

WHEREAS the continuance of a toll-free ferry service is guaranteed to residents in North Carolina by General Statute 136-89.197 and

WHEREAS Hyde County is among the poorest counties in North Carolina as indicated by their Tier 1 designation, and

WHEREAS placing tolls and/or increasing tolls on existing ferry service would create a financial hardship for local residents, and would impede their ability to obtain supplies and other services necessary to maintain their quality of life, and

WHEREAS, the Chowan County Board of Commissioners opposes placing tolls and/or increasing tolls on existing ferry service for the residents of Ocracoke Island and the suppliers of goods to the Island, and

WHEREAS, tourism is the leading industry on Ocracoke Island and the addition or increase of tolls, coupled with decreased ferry runs, would threaten the capability of businesses and working families to earn a living, and

WHEREAS this loss in revenue to the citizens of Hyde County would also result in loss of revenue to the State of North Carolina, and would negatively impact the economy, the cultural, and the overall well-being of the entire State, and

WHEREAS 6,013 acres of Ocracoke Island's total acreage of 6,429 acres is part of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore and is owned by the Federal government.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chowan County Board of Commissioners strongly oppose imposing new tolls on ferry service to or from Ocracoke Island, and do also oppose the increase of tolls on said ferry service, and do oppose any decrease in the level of ferry service to and from Ocracoke Island, North Carolina.

#### **External Board/Committee Reports**

Chairman Goodwin stated that board members are asked to report on the activities of the external boards to which they have been appointed.

Commissioner Cole reported on the activities of the Albemarle Regional Health Service Board.

Commissioner Mitchener provided an update on the activities of the Hospital Directors Council, Northeast Workforce Investment Consortium and Destination Downtown

Commissioner Nixon reported on the Regional Solid Waste Board and PCG Landfill Board noting a budget being developed. He reported on the TDA Board and Animal Shelter Advisory Committee. He stated the committee has authorized the manager to advertise and hire a shelter director.

Commissioner Lawrence noted the Airport Commission meeting was canceled and provided information on the activities of the COA Board.

#### **Albemarle Regional Health Services**

Mr. Lamb stated that the meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup>; the Board requested that the Manager negotiate with the Health Director a payback schedule of \$50,000 to ARHS for funds expended for the renovation of the Chowan County Health Department Building formerly the Albemarle Mental Health Building. Attached. Mr. Lamb stated that the letter from Mr. Parks agrees to pay back the \$50,000 over five years with \$10,000 be paid annually.

Commissioner Nixon moved that the payments for the \$50,000 be made monthly over five years. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Commissioner Winborne asked when the distributions would begin.

Mr. Lamb stated this will be budgeted to begin in July 2012. He added that a budget amendment would be provided at the next meeting to pay the Carrier bill for the air conditioner repair at the previous health department.

Ms. Stallings explained that a PO was issued for this charge in the previous year's budget but an invoice was not received until after the budget closed out.

Mr. Lamb stated that the Board is also asked to consider taking on the costs of mowing at the current Health Department Location along with the previous location. He added that it is customary for the county to pay for mowing since the facility is county owned.

Chairman Goodwin stated that the granite monument at the new health department location is missing. He asked that Mr. Lamb request that the Health Department brings it back to the county.

Commissioner Nixon stated that the Health Department would realize savings in utilities in the new location from the previous and the mowing can continue to be absorbed within their budget.

No further action was taken on the request.

### **Early Payment Discount**

Mr. Lamb asked that the Board consider a resolution that would end the discount for early payment of taxes in accordance with NCGS § 105-360 (c). He stated that the discount was established to assist the county with cash flow issues. He stated the allowed discount in 2009 was \$68,659, in 2010 it was \$83,317 and in 2011 \$88,782. He stated that if the money was set aside the interest for all three years totals \$14,247. He stated the net loss for the county is \$226,512. He stated he would suggest that the Board either discontinue the discount or reduce the existing percentage.

Chairman Goodwin asked if there is any public comment on the proposal.

John Sams stated that it did not make good business sense for the county to keep the discount in place.

Commissioner Nixon stated that he would like to see the monies from interest be put towards debt.

Ms. Woodley stated she is working on information regarding debt refinancing.

Commissioner Nixon asked if discontinuing the early discount would impact staff.

Mr. Kepley stated that the majority of the early payments are from lending institutions. He stated that the burden for collections would be shifted to the month of December in collections.

Mr. Lamb stated that the savings from discontinuing the discount could pay for a part time person.

Commissioner Winborne stated his concern over loosing cash but he felt that the majority of the residents were not taking advantage of the early discounts and that it only benefits lenders.

Commissioner Nixon asked if extra staff will be needed.

Commissioner Mitchener stated that he would like to see the additional revenues realized used to repay the loan from the Library Board of Trustees.

Mr. Lamb stated the lines in the tax office in December may be longer but that much of the tax receipts are from mortgage companies which mail checks.

Commissioner Winborne stated that he felt the discount should be discontinued and moved to approve the resolution. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed (6-1 Smith).

#### **RESCINDING THE DISCOUNT FOR EARLY PAYMENT OF TAX**

**WHEREAS**, N.C.G.S. 105-360(c) authorizes the governing body of any county or municipality to establish by resolution a schedule of discounts to apply to taxes paid prior to the due date of September 1; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Chowan County Commissioners now desires to rescind the adopted schedule which allowed discounts as hereinafter set forth for the payment of taxes prior to the due date;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESLOVED** by the Chowan County Board of Commissioners that a discount rate of two percent (2%) was previously adopted for application to all payments received prior to the date of August 1, and that a discount rate of one percent (1%) was previously adopted for application to all payments received on or after August 1 and prior to September 1;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Revenue for approval to rescind the discount schedule adopted on March 2, 2009 and upon such approval that the elimination of the discount shall be published at least once in the weekly newspaper the Chowan Herald;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this rescinding of the current discount schedule is effective for fiscal year 2012-2013 and for subsequent years unless rescinded or modified by the Chowan County Board of Commissioners in accordance with the law.

**ADOPTED** this the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March, 2012

**Tax Department Annual Report**

Kep Kepley provided the annual report from the Tax Office. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is in the meeting file labeled April 2, 2012.

Mr. Lamb stated that soon the County will have proposals for the revaluation for the board to consider. He stated that in the past there has been a 50-100% increase in county property values and stated that the Board should be prepared to not see any increase and possibly see a decrease in total county property values. He stated there is a possibility that the tax levy may have to be raised to maintain the same level of revenues. He stated he hoped the County would break even, but many counties are seeing a decrease.

### **Mowing Contract**

Mr. Lamb stated he is requesting permission to rebid the county's mowing contract for the mowing season beginning on July 1, 2012. He stated the current contract expires June 30<sup>th</sup> and the previous allowed for two one year renewals.

Commissioner Mitchener moved that the County re-bid the mowing contract.

Commissioner Nixon stated that the County should look into using inmate labor for weeding.

Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed (5-2 Winborne, Lawrence)

### **Finance Officer Report**

Finance Officer Kim Woodley reported on the following:

#### **Sales Tax Collections**

A copy of the report is in the meeting file labeled April 2, 2012. Mr. Lamb explained the distribution percentages for Articles 39, 40, 42 and 44.

### **Schedule a Budget Work session**

It is recommended that the Board schedule a work session in April to begin making recommendations on the proposed FY 2012-13 budget.

The Board reached a consensus for the clerk to poll each member to find a date. The Board also agreed to hold the work session at the Public Safety Center.

### **Timely and Important Matters**

Ms. Stallings reminded the Board members of the district meetings and the Chairman requested that the Board members fill out the questionnaires provided by the NCACC.

#### **Printer Request**

Mr. Lamb stated that the large mapping printer at Land Records crashed on Thursday. He stated that Ms. Sharpe planned to purchase the printer the next fiscal year. He stated that the costs is \$5,326 and Ms. Sharpe has located \$1,000 in her budget. He requested permission for the Board to authorize him to locate the additional monies within the current budget.

Commissioner Mitchener moved to allow the County Manager permission to locate the additional monies within the current budget. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed (7-0).

Commissioner Nixon stated that he would not want the manager to pull monies from fund balance.

#### ADJ Letter

Mr. Lamb requested permission to submit a letter of interest in exploring the joining with ADJ and Chowan County. There was not board objection.

#### Hotel Hinton (former county office building)

Commissioner Nixon stated that he felt it is important for the County to begin exploring options for the future of this building.

Chairman Goodwin encouraged the Board members to begin thinking of a price for the sale of the building and the topic will be discussed at a future meeting.

#### Closed Session

Commissioner Mitchener moved that the Board go into Closed Session in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(a) (6) personnel matter. Chairman Goodwin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

The minutes of the closed session are sealed.

Commissioner Winborne moved that the Board adjourn the closed session. Vice Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

#### Employee Bonus

Chairman Goodwin passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Nixon. He then moved that the Board give the two interim directors for Recreation and Maintenance a onetime \$1,000 bonus and reinstate their previous salary before assuming the additional interim responsibilities. Vice Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed (7-0).

The Board discussed the Library and the history of the loan from the Library Board of Trustees. The Board agreed to discuss the appropriation request from the Library at budget planning time.

**Adjourn**

Being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned

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Chairman  
Edward C. Goodwin

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Clerk